

EPA honors local environmental leaders

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Four organizations and individuals from the North Bay have been recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for their exceptional work and commitment to improving the environment.

All four -- George Zastrow, Straus Family Creamery, Petaluma Poultry, and 3M Petaluma -- were presented certificates from Rep. Lynn Woolsey, the Petaluma Democrat, at an awards ceremony on April 22 in San Francisco.

"These recipients of the EPA Environmental Award prove that businesses can be environmentally responsible -- and succeed," Woolsey said. "I am proud to work for and with these individuals and businesses in preserving the Russian River, protecting organic standards, and working to provide incentives for business to increase energy efficiency and incorporate the use of renewable energy in their day-to-day operations."

Zastrow, of Guerneville, co-chaired the Russian River Cleanup, which has yielded 2,000 tires, more than 400 yards of general trash, 200 yards of scrap metal, 150 barrels of recyclable materials, car batteries, paints, solvents and industrial materials.

Straus Family Creamery is an organic dairy and processor in Marshal. It processes milk from its own dairy and two others. Straus bottles its milk in recycled and reusable glass bottles, has retooled equipment to use less water, and supports family farmers by helping them convert to organic. It is also working to minimize pollution from its dairy.

Petaluma Poultry is a leader in the production of natural, free range and organic chicken. Its employees formed a "sustainability team" to reduce the facility's ecological footprint at its feed mill, hatchery, farms and processing plant, and administrative and sales offices.

3M Company's facilities at Petaluma (and also at Irvine in Southern California) were credited with significantly reducing its organic air emissions, releases to water, waste generation and toxic chemical releases.

FORGIVENESS WORKSHOP: Stanford University researcher Frederic Luskin holds a workshop on "The Power of Forgiveness" on Saturday at the Meadows in Napa.

Luskin, who specializes in the connection between spirituality and health, is director of the Stanford Forgiveness Project, a large-scale research project on the training and measurement of forgiveness. He is also the author of "Forgive for Good: A Proven Prescription for Health and Happiness."

Forgiveness researchers at Stanford and other institutions have found that practicing forgiveness enhances personal well-being, including peace of mind, and has important implications for the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular and other chronic diseases.